Movies in Color

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MOVIES IN COLOR

A website featuring stills from films and their corresponding color palettes.
A tool to promote learning and inspiration. Updated daily.

Movies in Color offers artists, designers, and filmmakers inspiring color palettes based on a vast array of film stills drawn from contemporary titles, classics, arthouse releases, animated features, and television. Created solely by graphic designer Roxy Radulescu, the website presents a fun and novel collection of images and their light, medium, dark, color sample spectrums. Most of the film stills are selected by Radulescu who then develops the palettes in Photoshop. She invites suggestions for film stills which she will then generate into palettes. By capturing these variations and nuances of color, based on these split-second components, Movies in Color elevates and literally accentuates the artistry involved in cinematography and color design, while positioning the palettes for creative reuse and inspiration.

Movies in Color is freely accessible and hosted on the popular blog platform, Tumblr. This type of informal structure may not be ideal for focused research or exploration but it is more approachable and visually engaging because of its relatively intuitive browsing format. That said, the experience of the site is somewhat hampered or distracted by the occasional advertisement (usually film or film industry related). The content may be accessed through the general categories of film, director, and most interestingly, cinematographer.
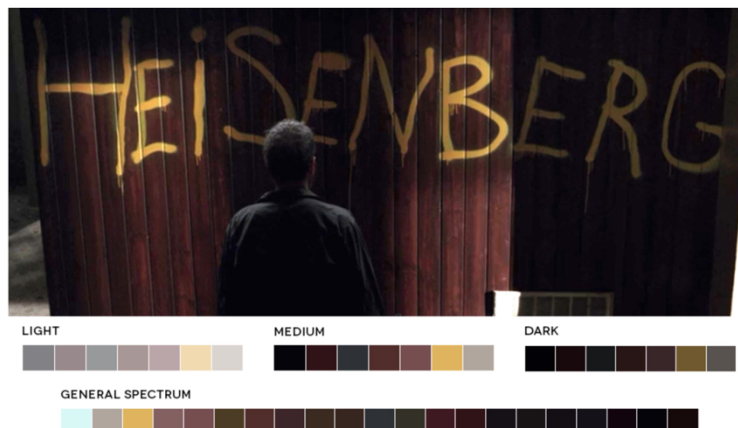
The site aspires to be "an educational pursuit that showcases the relationship between color, cinematography, set design, and production design." While the intention is a good one, the simplicity of the site and its content somewhat defies this aim. For example, it would be helpful if there were other categories through which to consider the palettes, such as country, year, and film stock type. In fact, a film stock facet or film stock access point is likely most relevant to this site's mission given that the relationship between film stock, film quality, and color is so inextricable. By illustrating transitions between film process and film stock, such as Kodachrome, Technicolor, Eastman Color, and ultimately digital, the user will better grasp the chemical and technical processes that create color. It would be interesting to compare, through color palettes, the use of different film stocks, many of which have been discontinued. With that in mind, browsing the content by release year would reveal interesting patterns about filmmaking and production. These additional features could easily bring Movies in Color closer towards realizing its goal as an educational resource rather than a visually stimulating but simplistic survey of film stills and their corresponding palettes.

There are a variety of sites, resources, and tools available to examine film and the role color plays beyond the still - consider the use of collages, mosaics, animated thumbnails, and video gisting techniques. Other film color visualization efforts such as The Colors of Motion site, developed by Charlie Clark, uses a more direct visualization technique by extracting the average color value for each frame and plotting them along a continuum. However, because these frames are miniaturized to a small scale, the imagery contained in the still is impossible to view.

While any of these features would enhance Movies in Color, it is not clear if the site is still actively maintained; the last entry, at time of writing, was dated March 2015, and the blog itself contains an occasional personal post which distracts from the mission of the site. Regardless, Movies in Color is a playful, creative resource with broad applications for artists, designers, and filmmakers seeking new approaches to color design.